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## Teamwork leads to client success

"Ricky does much more than just stocking," says Amanda Herdel, Store Manager of Walgreens in Moncks Corner. "Ricky leads by example, raises the morale in the store, and increases employee engagement."

Ricky Joyner came to the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department Berkeley-Dorchester office in January of 2013.

"I tried to obtain employment on my own, but felt that no one would hire me due to my disability," explains Joyner.

Latoya Jenkins, SCVRD counselor, discussed options with Joyner and first recommended Job Readiness Training for him.

"I felt Ricky could benefit from training," she says. "The Work Training Center would help build his stamina while Job Preparedness classes would provide skills in workplace etiquette."

After a month in training at the Berkeley-Dorchester office, Jenkins thought Joyner was ready. "He made a lot of progress," says Jenkins. "His stamina was built up and he had completed several JPI classes."

Elaine Ellington, a fellow SCVRD counselor, had established a great rapport with the local Walgreens store manager and shared with Jenkins that there may be an opportunity for a Customer Service Associate position there. Jenkins eagerly arranged for Joyner to enter into a job tryout.

Kevin Patterson, SCVRD job coach, worked with Joyner utilizing on-the-job training. Patterson felt that Joyner could be successful with a simple accommodation. After a little research he determined that if Walgreens would agree to "carve" the job description just a bit, to replace "cashiering" with another responsibility called "mylar tagging," Joyner would be a great fit.

"Walgreens was very receptive to providing the accommodation that Ricky needed," explains Patterson. "They simply replaced one job duty with another that was equally important."

With Joyner's positive attitude and hard work, along with the creativity and support of his VR team, he became a permanent part-time employee of Walgreens on June 19, 2013.

"I really don't know what it looks like for Ricky not to be smiling," recalls Patterson. "To see his face the day he got the job was more rewarding than any amount of money."

"We all believed in Ricky and worked together so that we could help him pursue his dreams," states Jenkins. "It is very exciting to see him get this opportunity."

After four months of being employed as a customer service associate at Walgreens, Joyner received recognition. "He was awarded Employee of



*Ricky Joyner, former SCVRD client, is a customer service associate at Walgreens in Moncks Corner.*

Smiling, Joyner says, "This was the best thing that has ever happened to me."

"It's an honor and privilege to work for this agency," says Wade. "I appreciate the tremendous support our board gives VR and our Commissioner's leadership. I believe in our mission and feel blessed to work with the best people in world, who are very passionate about what they do. I'm grateful and humbled by this."

*Pictured: SCVRD Assistant Commissioner Mark Wade, right, receiving the "Excellence in Achievement and Distinguished Service Award" from Dr. Roxzanne Breland, Vice Chair of the SC State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation board.*

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## Serve Safe class for Horry-Georgetown VR clients

The first of what will be an on-going training opportunity for SCVRD clients in Horry-Georgetown counties was hosted by the Conway Area Office on August 20th.

The *Serve Safe* class was conducted in cooperation with instructors from Horry-Georgetown Technical College, who provided instruction in food handling and preparation. The program covers five key areas: basic food safety, personal hygiene, cross-contamination, time/temperature, and cleaning and sanitization. Participants must pass an exam at the end of the class and receive certification good for three years.

"The class is designed to prepare participants to work in the food industry," says area supervisor KaTina Johnson. "Our hope is that this will give them an extra advantage during the hiring process."

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## Career fair covers Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties

More than 5,500 students from middle and high schools in Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties attended the two day Career Fair Expo, held at Littlejohn Coliseum in Clemson on October 2-3.

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VR staff from the Anderson area were on hand to provide information about transition services and answer students' questions about entering the world of work.

More than 60 business and industry leaders were represented, showcasing careers, cluster groups, training opportunities, education tracks and more.

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## Open House at the Bryant Center



Representative Rita Allison, center, and Representative William Chumley, right, present the Proclamation from the House of Representatives for National Disability Employment Awareness (NDEA) Month as Area Supervisor Jennie Thomas looks on at the Bryant Center in Lyman on

October 17. During the presentation, Representatives Allison and Chumley acknowledged all of the work accomplished at the Bryant Center for individuals with disabilities.

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## Charleston Open House

More than 55 guests attended the Charleston Area Office Open House on Friday, October 25.

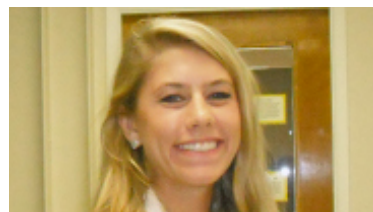


Cooper River Bridge Run was recognized for being a valued business partner in providing a large volume of work for VR clients in the work training center.

*Pictured: Mark Cellers of Cooper River Bridge Run.*

Rewined Candles, LLC was recognized for being a valued business partner in providing employment opportunities for 22 clients during 2012-2013. Currently, 78% of Rewined's workforce is made up of current or former VR clients.

*Pictured: Hannah Bise of Rewined Candles,*





LLC.



Steven Edwards was presented the local Client Achievement Award by Shannon Reed.



Wally West gave tours of the work training center.

**Note: As many Open House events continued into late October and November, other VP offices will be featured in next month's issue.**

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## Friday the 13th brings good luck to Oconee-Pickens VR client



Friday the 13th turned out to be a very lucky day for both the Oconee-Pickens VR office and client Samantha Wright. When Wright reported to Job Readiness Training (JRT) that morning, her counselor, Beverly Smith, informed her that her long awaited interview at Glen Raven Industries had been scheduled for 1 pm by Business Development Specialist Anna Connelly.

Smith, along with Cheryl Miller, Vocational ACE/Job Preparedness Instructor (VACE/JPI), gave Wright some last minute advice and words of encouragement before Wright left for her interview.

At 2 pm Wright returned with a job. On hand to hear the good news was SCVRD Commissioner Barbara Hollis, who happened to be visiting the Oconee-Pickens office.

The work training center has a bell which clients ring when they land a job, and when Samantha Wright rang the bell, everyone on the training center floor stopped to cheer.

*Pictured, left to right: Barbara Hollis, SCVRD Commissioner; Samantha Wright, client; Beverly Smith, Counselor; Cheryl Miller, Vocational ACE/Job Preparedness Instructor.*

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## Did you know...

...that only 21 percent of Americans with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 participate in the labor force? That compares with 69 percent of people without disabilities.

*(Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor)*

Also, a recent study by Cornell University revealed that people with disabilities are paid about 10 percent less than other workers in similar jobs.

*(Source: USAToday.com, Oct. 23)*

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## Events

### Camden

- November 5 - **DIY Child Support Reduction/ Termination Workshop.** Instruction by SC Legal System. This type of class will be beneficial to those who have had a RECENT financial hardship, such as the loss of a job through no fault of their own, or who have a disability they can document either by their receipt of SSI or SS Disability benefits or through medical evidence from their physician.  
*For more information, call 803-432-1068 or 866-206-5280*

### Lexington

- November 6 - **Open House.**  
*For more information, call 803-896-6333 or 866-206-5184*

### Anderson

- November 8 - **Disability Mentoring Day and Open House.** DMD begins at 8:45 am and Open House begins at 9 am.  
*For more information, call 864-882-6669 or 866-313-0082*

### Greenville/Greer

- November 9 - Staff will participate in the **"Run for Thought" 5K Trail Run and 1 Mile Walk/Roll** at Conestee Park. This event raises awareness about brain injury.  
*For more information, call 864-297-3066*

## Enabling eligible South Carolinians with disabilities to prepare for, achieve and maintain competitive employment

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